

**THE ANTHROPOLOGY
OF ENCOUNTERS
A TALÁLKOZÁSOK
ANTROPOLÓGIÁJA**

Edited by / Szerkesztette
LAJOS Veronika – POVEDÁK István – RÉGI Tamás

Magyar Kulturális Antropológiai Társaság

Budapest, 2017.

A borítón látható képet Régi Tamás készítette
a dél-etióp murszik között

Olvasószerkesztő
Balikáné Bognár Mária

© Szerzők és szerkesztők, 2017
Minden jog fenntartva!

ISBN 978-615-80336-5-7

Felelős kiadó:
A. Gergely András

Printed in Hungary
Innovariant Nyomdaipari Kft., Algyő
General manager: György Drágán
www.innovariant.hu
www.facebook.com/innovariant

Abdessamad BELHAJ

PARALLEL ETHICS, GUILTY ENCOUNTERS: ISLAMIC MODESTY IN HUNGARY

1. Introduction

Since 1989, Europe has been debating, legislating and protesting about Muslim signs and claims of modesty. The question of modesty became a subject of public debate as some Muslims, who, in the name of modesty, refuse mixing in swimming pools, demand exonerating Muslim pupils from handshaking with teachers, claim the Headscarf, Burqa, Burkini, etc. Additionally, other claims of modesty concern bioethics as some Muslim women are required to be checked only by female doctors, or refuse to breastfeed their babies in public places, etc. Even more, as modesty became a matter of public discussion and, therefore of exhibition (ex. veiled Muslim women's pictures on media and the marketization of Islamic modesty, Shirazi 2016: 144–174), a paradox of its own took shape, raising several questions, either by way of objection or scholarly investigation.

Many Europeans perceive such insistence on modesty as attempts to display parallel ethics, centred on the guilt of the female body and sex segregation, which not only was abandoned by European societies, but considered to be harmful for gender equality, social mixture and cohesion. Some non-Muslims might even feel guilty because Muslim modesty accuses them of being immoral, nude, or immodest. A seemingly embarrassing situation for many, Muslims and non-Muslims, occurs when each leaves its comfortable ethical norms to meet the others. Often, parallel ethics provide a solution to avoid conflict. Yet, most of the time, parallel ethics produce reactions of rejection and mistrust. As people try to live together in Europe, despite their differences, parallel ethics is another field to investigate properly.

This paper argues that behind the claims of Islamic modesty in European societies there lies an Islamic moral management whereby the outward matters as much as the inward in embodying ethics. Islamic ethics require a Muslim to be distinct, and in order to be distinct, one has to oppose or evolve in parallel with another ethos, that of immodesty, perceived in relation to a given society. Distinctiveness also requires visibility and, by implication, the modest person is also the one who exhibits signs of modesty. Islamic ethical discourses see no sense in private modesty. This could seem like another paradox: how could modesty be „*ostentatoire*“, to use the famous French word (French law banned the headscarf in 2004 as being ostentatious)? If the exhibition of modesty is relational to immodesty, and as European societies get more relaxed with the body, sex and gender, Islamic modesty might, on the contrary, increase in moral anxiety in Europe. In the last thirty years, Islamic modesty was re-appropriated in the face

of “western” modernization, and many Muslims feel oppressed morally by an immodest modernity. As an Islamic traditionalist scholar puts it, Muslims today have the right to modesty, *ḥaqq al-ḥayāʾ* (ʿAḥfi: 1987).

The idea of this paper is to provide first a broader view on modesty and its ethical rules in normative Islam, and put these ethical questions in the context of the links of religion with society. This contextualization of Islamic ethical discourses explains how the traditional Sunni Hungarian Muslim community appropriates the Islamic norms. Afterward, I will describe and analyse how the discourse and the practice of modesty are perceived by Muslims in the Hungarian context. Although in a few instances I look at modesty as a general character of men and women, and in some examples I specifically touch on Islamic discourses on male modesty, the focus of my study is female modesty. Male modesty concerns other aspects such as beards, males wearing jewelry, and male sports clothes in many games such as wrestling, gymnastics and swimming, which is beyond the scope of our study (Krawietz 2014: 445–458).

2. Approaches to Muslim Modesty in Anthropology

A study by Asifa Siraj among Muslims in Scotland shows that conservative and liberal Muslims hold remarkably similar views on the importance of female modesty (Siraj 2011: 716–731). Moreover, it highlights the need for Muslim moral agents for distinctiveness and visibility:

For all these women, wearing the hijab was motivated by religion. It visibly marked them as Muslim women in a non-Muslim environment: The first day that I wore it... I was thinking ‘oh my God’, everyone was looking at me. But now when I go out to take the bins out, I can’t actually go without my hijab. It feels as though it is part of me. *I want to show everyone that I am a Muslim* (Fariha, 22 years old) (Siraj 2011: 724).

Following Abu-Lughod, one can identify four paradigms when addressing the issue of modesty in Muslim societies (Abu-Lughod 2009). The first paradigm argues that modesty is a *system of meaning*. It consists of respectful behavior and sexual correctness, as a part of a code of honor of kinship which expresses the social status of the family and embodies the moral ideals of men and women (Abu-Lughod 1986). A second paradigm, functionalism, perceives in modesty a way to preserve the patrilineal kin group. For this purpose, it excludes women from interfering in decision-making over property and marriage alliances and “outcastes” marginal socially groups (Meneley 1996). Obviously, Lughod’s approach is to a great extent functionalist as well. A third approach that could be labeled internalized modesty maintains that the ideals and discourses of modesty are experienced, learned, or cultivated by women themselves. The assertion of

modesty as a moral ideal and the feelings of shame or embarrassment that women experience in situations when they find themselves inappropriately dressed (Hossain 2013). That is to say, internalized modesty provides a system of meaning for the “modest” women. A fourth paradigm, that of piety as a vehicle of politics, Islam understands modesty to be integral to the modern realisation of “closeness to God” following the new wave of piety promoted by political Islam (Mahmood 2001: 202–236).

Some anthropologists contest the use of the concept of modesty to describe the moral code underlying Muslim practices in contemporary Islam. For instance, Fadwa El Guindi, in her *Veil: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance*, argues that

the modesty-based code – modesty–shame–seclusion – represents an ethnocentric imposition on Arabo-Islamic culture. It makes more sense in Christian Mediterranean societies and, without shame, the Hindu-based societies of south Asia. This cluster of concepts is inaccurately ethnocentric; but, more importantly, it obscures the nuanced difference that is characteristic of Arabo-Islamic culture. The “modesty–honor” gendered opposition is equally inappropriate (El Guindi 1999: 83).

El Guindi suggests sanctity–reserve–respect to read this moral code rather than modesty–shame–seclusion, with evidence, primarily from Islamic law, relying especially on the notion of *ḥurma* (Krawietz: 1991), which she renders as sanctity, and which he claims to be close to the notion of privacy (El Guindi 1999: 85). She contends that “the quality of *ḥurma* (which centers womanhood and home in the culture) embodies a pervasive complex of values that identifies primary social and religious spheres as sanctuaries – sacred and inviolable” (El Guindi 1999: 88).

The whole argument of El Guindi is based on a denial of the physiological dimension of Islamic moral discourse on women. That is to say, she does not find in the Muslim moral tradition any evidence that considers a woman’s body to be shameful. The evidence that contradicts her claim is legion. Suffice it here to mention moral discourses on the women’s voices. In Quran 31:32, it is stated that “Wives of the Prophet, you are not as other women. If you are godfearing, be not abject in your speech, so that he in whose heart is sickness may be lustful; but speak honourable words” (Arberry’s translation). Another instance is the widely spread legal Islamic tradition “The voice of the woman is a nudity” (al-Aḥmad 2008: 22), which also became central to Islamic popular cultures to the point that most popular cultures in Muslim countries blame women if they raise their voice, and speak out in the presence of men. Moreover, Islamic law disapproves of women’s call to prayer as this entails that women should raise their voices, and they are not allowed to do that” (al-Aḥmad 2008: 25). One can also mention here a tradition that concerns the five daily prayers, and which asserts that “Whoever is alarmed by anything whilst praying, let men say ‘Subhan-Allaah’ and let women clap” (al-Aḥmad 2008: 27). This means that men can communicate through their

voices while women cannot: and should clap. In Hajj and „Umrah, a place of sanctity, a woman should praise God with a voice that she only can hear, while men praise loudly” (al-Aḥmad 2008: 28–30).

Forbidding women’s voices in religion is contested although it is still a dominating narrative. Dorothea Schulz studied the radio-mediated interventions of female group leaders and examined their critics “who articulate the Muslim scholarly opinion that women should not be allowed to preach in public because of the seductiveness of their voices and somewhat condescendingly refer to the female leaders as ‘radio *hadjas*’ and challenge them on two grounds: their lack of modesty and their lack of religious knowledge” (Schulz 2012: 24).¹

Whether modesty is a system of meaning, a social tool of a patriarchal order, a lived experience of being fully Muslim or a politically pious act, a key issue in the expression of Muslim modesty today is the necessity for these agents to always compare Islamic modesty to non-Muslim immodesty and the necessity to be seen and appear as modest. The aim of this paper is to explore distinctiveness in Muslim ethics as parallel ethics. I suggest considering *distinctiveness* as another angle of approach to modesty.² This approach takes seriously into account both the normative discourse about modesty, to which refers the moral agents as a system of meaning, and the function of such distinctiveness in a given moral order. As a matter of fact, *distinctiveness* implies duality as the moral agent is concerned about what to show and what to hide, the visible and the invisible, the one and the other. Concern for modesty might lead to anxiety and obsession with immodesty.

3. Parallel ethics: Rules of Islamic modesty

Since its foundational texts, the Qur’an and the Sunna, Muslim ethics have made modesty an essential value. For example, the Quran 24:30–31 states that “Say to the believers, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts; that is purer for them. God is aware of the things they work. And say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes’ and guard their private parts, and reveal not their adornment save such as is outward” (Arberry’s translation). Moreover, the Quran 33: 59 states: “O Prophet, say to thy wives and daughters and the believing women, that they draw their veils close to them; so it is likelier they will be known, and not hurt. God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate”. (Arberry’s translation). One can notice at least two motives in the Quranic discourse on modesty: that modesty is related to shame, as the Quranic discourse requires women

1 See also on female modesty in reciting the Quran, singing and speaking on the phone, in: Damir-Geilsdorf & Tramontini (2015). Currently, Rahina Muazu is writing a promising PhD dissertation on *The Recited Qur’an and Vocal Nudity: Contestations over the Female Voice in the Nigerian Public Space* at Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies. http://www.bgsmcs.fu-berlin.de/en/people/students/students_2014/muazu-rahina.html (2017.01.22.).

2 Remotely, I am indebted to Pierre Bourdieu’s distinction theory. See Bourdieu 1979.

and men to cast down their eyes and guard their private parts. On the other hand, modesty is associated with believing men and women.

According to the prophetic tradition, modesty, *ḥayā'* is a part of faith; by implication, those without faith, lack modesty, because a person who does not believe in God commits the first act of immodesty, as they are expected to show modesty, first and foremost, in front of God, by believing in him. The tradition states that "the Prophet passed by a man who berating his brother about his modesty to the point where he told him: I will beat you. The Prophet said: Let him be. Modesty is part of faith" (al-Bukhārī 2009: 602). Muḥammad is described in the Islamic tradition as modest as a virgin. One tradition states that „the Prophet was more modest than a virgin behind her curtain; and when he saw anything that displeased him, we saw the marks of it in his blessed face, although he would not speak of it from modesty" (al-Tibrīzī 1810: 672). Another tradition affirms that "Every religion has a distinctive virtue, and the distinctive virtue of Islam is modesty" (Ibn al-Bāghandī 1977: 178). In another tradition, the Prophet was reported to have said: "There are five conducts that distinguish the Prophets-shame, patience, taking cupping, cleansing feet and using perfume" (al-Ghazālī 1993: 137).

Modesty is not only a distinctive religious sign, but also a visible public sign so much so that one can see modesty on the face of the modest person; one tradition says that "whoever has modesty, it is his ornament" (al-Tibrīzī 1810: 430). In the same vein, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) ascribed the following tradition to the Prophet: "The Prophet said: There is no sin in back-biting a person who has shaken off the screen of shame from his face" (al-Ghazālī 1993: 137). Another tradition ascribed to the Ṣāliḥ Ibn 'Abd al-Quddūs (late 8th century), a Muslim theologian, ascetic and poet (executed for heresy) said: "When tears diminish, modesty also. And there is no good in a face whose tears diminish" (al-Muhammad 2013: 8). In Muslim ethics, a woman's "*ḥayā'* (shame, modesty) is considered her beauty (*zīna*) and a means in protecting men and society from committing sin" (Kaivanara 2016: 72).

Therefore, the normative discourse insists equally on adopting a modest behavior than on warning against the immodest one. The list of the latter is, by the nature of things, longer. It includes: exhibition of sins, consumption of cigarettes, and forbidden things in the public, stubbornness, insults, excess of polemics and dispute, ingratitude towards parents, lack of politeness towards educators and teachers, the nuisance towards neighbors, and people in general, to sing publicly, to squeeze the tires of his car, rude and unpleasant jokes, exhibitionism, nudity and debauchery, unveil the veil, mixing with men in shopping malls, moral or sexual harassment, the imitation of the depraved habits of the unbelievers, wanting too much attention or envy, to speak too much about oneself, shouting in shopping malls, the vulgar writings on the walls, etc. (al-Ḥamad 2013: 18–20). Such a list corresponds to social practices, seen as immodest, in a conservative society, the Saudi one. In a different context, as we will see later, the list of immodest practices would be certainly different.

Normative Islam also requires the Muslim to *exhibit* modesty; that is to say, not only one has to avoid the aforementioned signs of immodesty, but also has to make sure through ethical action that no immodesty is visible and strive to make modesty inhabit the moral space. In order to make modesty public, one should frequent modest people and get away from coarse characters, enjoin and advise one another on modesty, propagate an atmosphere of modesty within society, educate children to be modest, make disappear scrupulously what is contrary to modesty (al-Ḥamad 2013: 21).

Consequently, modesty is not a universal value, ethically speaking, to be applied in all times and spaces. Modesty does not apply, for example, to learning, commanding right and forbidding wrong. A person should pursue religious knowledge in particular without any consideration for modesty. Nobody should shy away neither from applying Islamic law and ethics in the public, ruling justly, or testifying in the courts, etc. (Ibn al-Bāghandī 1977: 178). The criteria of making some areas exonerated from modesty is that any obligation by Islamic law should be respected, independently from any ethical consideration.

In addition to the previous traditional Sunni sources on modesty, we shall have a look now at Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*'s say on modesty, a source that is considered to be the sum of ethical teachings in Islam from a mainstream Sunni Islam point of view, mixing both Sufi as well as traditionalist elements. Al-Ghazālī uses the term *ḥayā'* for modesty, as it is the standard religious word for it. However, Fazl-ul-Karim, the translator of the work into English, renders *ḥayā'* as shame. In the third volume of the work al-Ghazālī states that:

To feel shame is also a matter of sorrow and is good. The Prophet said: Shame is a part of faith. He said: Shame does not bring but good, he said: God loves the shameful and patient. 'He who commits sin and does not feel shame to disclose it, brings his own ruin. Shame is a conduct which begets good conduct (al-Ghazālī 1993: 239).

Al-Ghazālī draws attention here to the guilt aspect of modesty, very much related to his Sufi ethics. He also reiterates the need to conceal sin, and to protect the public space from immodesty. Another element in his teaching is the moral economy of modesty: the latter is good and generates God's love and goodness endlessly, while immodesty generates ruin.

With regard to clothing, al-Ghazālī held the opinion of the majority of traditional scholars which is to encourage women to stay at home, and if they go out, they should be veiled, including the face. Al-Ghazālī states that:

Nowadays, it is permissible for a chaste woman to go out with the permission of her husband; however, remaining [at home] is safer. 'She should not go out except for an important purpose; going out for the sake of looking [about] and for unimportant matters detracts from virtue and may lead to corruption. If she goes out, she

must avoid looking at men. We are not saying that the man's face is shameful for her to look at as is the woman's face for him. Rather, it is for her like the face of the beardless boy which a man should be prevented from seeing when sight may result in evil; when evil is not likely to result, sight should not be prevented. For men throughout the ages have had unveiled faces while women go out veiled; if their faces were shameful for women to look at, men would have been commanded to be veiled or prevented from going out except for a necessary purpose' (al-Ghazālī 1984: 101).

Thus far we have examined a Salafi source (al-Ḥamad), a classical source (al-Ghazālī) and now we shall examine *al-Mawsū'a al-fiqhiyya*, the *Encyclopedia of Islamic Law*, a contemporary traditional source which represents the mainstream position among Sunni jurists and theologians today. *The Encyclopedia of Islamic law* stipulates that modesty, *ḥayā'* governs different ethical situations: a person who intends to commit a sin, a victim of an attack, a person asked by a beggar, or a person expected to speak out in a council. In all these situations, a person should control him/herself, and refrain from the bad and enjoin the good according to modesty. Some situations are legalistic, that is to say, they are governed by Islamic law: if a thing is forbidden, refraining from it is obligatory, and if a thing is abominable, modesty is recommended. If a matter is obligatory, modesty is forbidden (*al-Mawsū'a al-fiqhiyya* 1990: 262). *The Encyclopedia of Islamic Law* goes further stating that no modesty should be displayed in confronting the unjust people and the sinful ones, which should be reprimanded; equally, no modesty should be respected when it comes to enjoining the good, and forbidding the wrong (*al-Mawsū'a al-fiqhiyya* 1990: 263). This is quite summative and leaves room for interpreting the scope of sin, the good and the bad. Finally, this *Encyclopedia* mentions a concrete situation; if a person invited himself to some meal and sat with them, and then they invited him to eat out of modesty (embarrassment rather?), it is not permitted for him to eat this food (*al-Mawsū'a al-fiqhiyya* 1990: 263). It can be seen here that Islamic law attempts to remedy some limitations of modesty-based ethics. Insisting on manifesting modesty everywhere, makes the whole social ethic care about harmony and appearance, which some social actors exploit as an opportunity to use it for their benefit. This could be called an appeal to modesty.

4. Islamic Modesty for Hungarian Muslims

The *Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza* (MME) is the chief organisation of Muslims in Hungary, and operates the main website on Islam in Hungarian: <http://iszlami.com/>. One evident particularity of its discourse on modesty is the immediate engagement with modesty requirements for both men and women, which is often absent in Arabic speaking discourses on modesty, which focus on the modesty of women. This could be seen as an egalitarian stance on the issue of gender.

According to the MME, man's modesty requires the male's body parts, between the navel and the knees, to be covered. A man cannot dress in tight, transparent or provocative clothing. That a man should cover these parts corresponds to the requirements of the practice of prayer in Islam. This is a minimal conception of modesty. This style of dressing refers to Western society whose men are perceived to dress immodestly, exhibiting their bodies. As for women, it maintains that "the Islamic head scarf is a symbol of modesty, which aims to protect women. The Islamic philosophy is always better to choose the safe way than to regret later. The Qur'an gives a lot of attention to protect physically women".³ However, it does not specify the type of headscarf that is required, whether integral or not, leaving the impression that the organisation does not require the face and the hands to be covered.

It is evident here that the MME endorses, mainly, a "body-to-be-covered" perception of modesty. In other words, there are parts which cause moral shame and should be covered. It confirms the idea of visibility as a sign of modesty, and in the case of women, this becomes more transparent. It claims the semiotics of the headscarf as a symbol of modesty (meaning as a visible sign of modesty). It also recalls the protective function of the headscarf, against aggressive men. It implies that without the headscarf women are left unsafe. The physical protection of women (and not modesty itself as a value) becomes the ultimate meaning of the headscarf.

The other Islamic organisation in Hungary, the *Magyar Iszlám Közösség*, released a document in Hungarian on women's modesty which argues as follows:

Suppose you have two sisters who are twins, they are both equally beautiful. Strolling down the street, one of them is dressed according to Islamic veil, so only her face and hands to the wrists appears. The other twin girl wears Western clothes, a mini skirt or shorts. In one corner, there is a hooligan or ruffian who is waiting to pass at a girl. Who will be the victim? The veiled or non-veiled girl? Of course, the one wearing miniskirts or shorts will make a pass at her. These clothes are an indirect invitation to the opposite sex, and let him know that you can start with me. The Qur'an rightly argued that the veil protects women from being upset.⁴

In addition to its distinctive function as a visible sign of modesty, the headscarf seems to be a protector against the ills of the Western civilisation. It might be said that the headscarf stands at the center of a clash of parallel ethics: detabooisation of the body in modernity, a process that has continued in significant dimensions in the last fifty years, and retabooisation by Islamic ethics.

³ The clothing of Muslims: <http://iszlami.com/hittan/tisztasag-az-iszlamban/item/1589-a-muszlim-oltozkodese> (2017.03.29.)

⁴ "Hidzsáb a nők számára" (Hijab for women) the handout of a lecture given by one of the members of the community in the mosque.

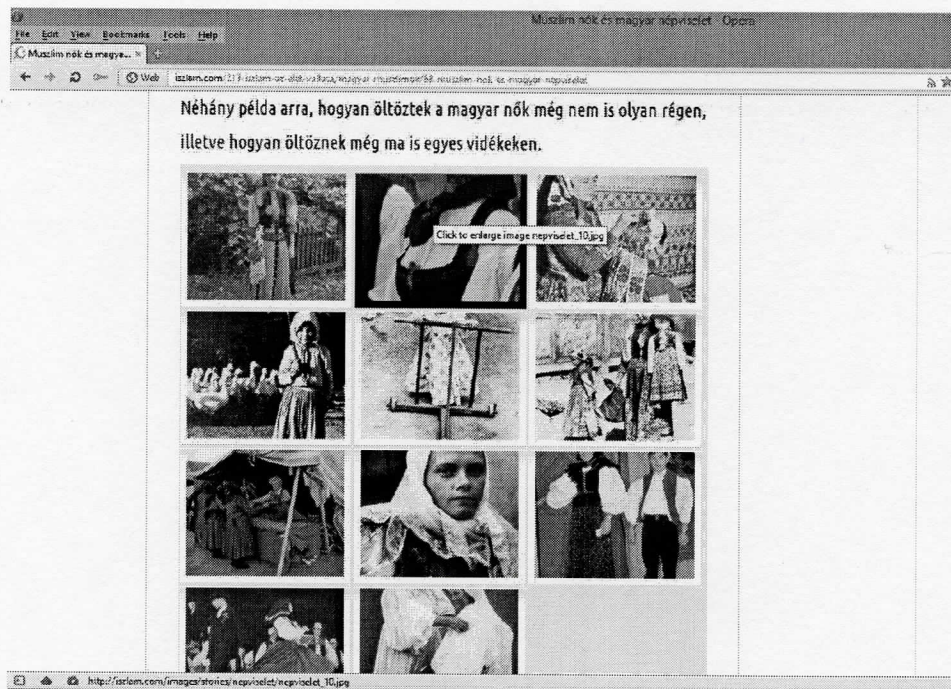
5. Muslim women as true Hungarian women

The MME claims that Muslim women are similar to Hungarian traditional women. It tries to build a case for Islam as fitting Hungary, while at the same time condemns the current Hungarian society. Hungarian Muslims therefore seem to be the most truthful to true Hungary, as they keep the best of it, incarnated in Islamic ethics. The website puts it as follows:

Modesty is still part of our daily lives. The images can show in today's Muslim women how traditional Hungarian women used to dress: that the ladies are veiled wrist-length top line, and full-length clothing covering their feet. The folk women tied their headscarf to the back for their daily work, but when they went to church, they covered their necks as well.⁵

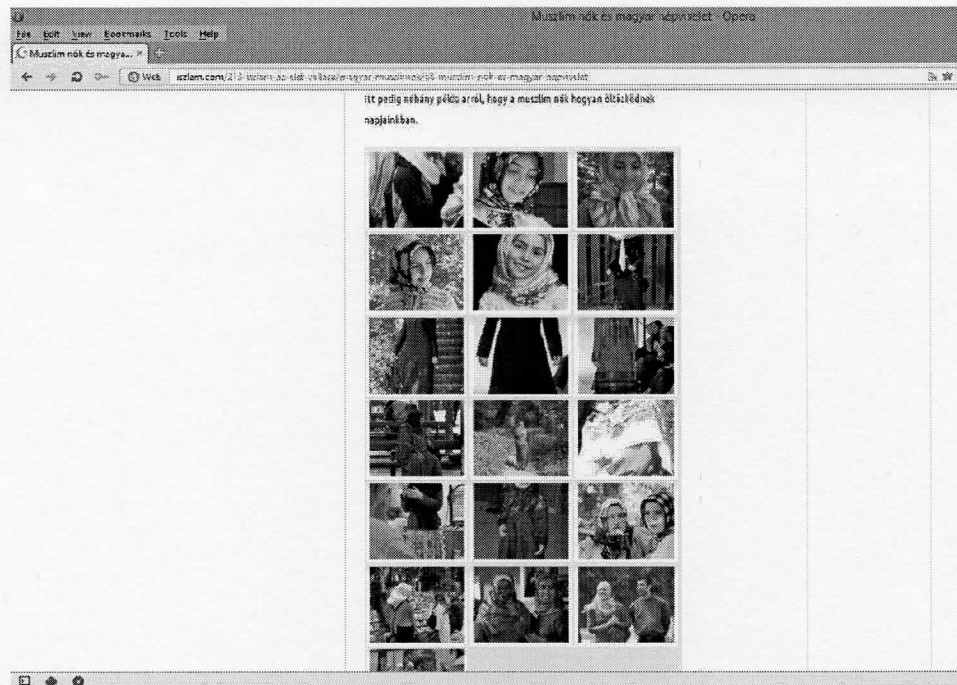
Figure 1-2.: The heading says "Some examples of how Hungarian women used to dress, not so long ago, and how they dress even today in some areas".

Source: (*Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza*, <http://iszlami.com>)



⁵ Muslim women and Hungarian traditional costume: <http://iszlami.com/az-imakrol-1-resz-kerdezz-felelek-eszrevetelek/68> (2017.03.29.)

Parallel Ethics, Guilty Encounters: Islamic Modesty in Hungary



Here, the idea of ethical parallel is of the utmost importance. One can observe three sets of ethical parallels: Current Hungarian Muslims live in parallel with the current Hungarian society as they have opposing ethical standards. Hungarians today also live in parallel to past *true Hungarians*. Hungarian Muslims exist as well in parallel with past true Hungarians as the latter were not Muslims and *lived in the past*. Hungarian Muslims are *new* while at the same time *true* to the past.

One major difference between Hungarian Muslims and past Hungarians is distinction. Traditional Hungarian women were not distinguished by their clothes: they wore what women used to wear according to the ethical standards of the time and the space they lived in. Hungarian Muslim women wear clothes that distinguished them from everything in their Hungarian context.

Behind the idea of distinction and comparison, even with a remote parallel, there probably lies a guilty encounter with the current Hungarian society. Distinctiveness if not rewarded might make the moral agent feel marginalized. Certain agents might choose to assume marginality, and turn it into a distinctive trait to be used as a social or economic resource. Other agents can hardly cope with the status of marginality. Hungarian Muslims being a tiny minority, until now, unable to turn marginality into a local economic or social resource, might need to de-culpabilise their distinctiveness by appealing to the Hungarian past (usually valued by current Hungarians), as Muslims, they appeal to two "backwards": that of the Hungarian backward (when women are imagined to be more modest) and of that the Muslim tradition (where the norms are imagined

to be perfect), they hope to meet the right norms of modesty. In fact, by reversing evolution, this moral discourse admits its own paradox, that its ethical standards come from an opposing time and space to that of their society.

Then, visibility becomes both a resource and an obstacle. Without visibility no distinctiveness can be achieved, and nobody would see or notice you. A Hungarian Muslim woman, E. perfectly expressed this paradox of parallel ethics, distinctiveness and visibility:

I have been happy to dress this way because I realize that this is happening in my own interest, since so – even here, even in the Western culture – experiencing more esteem and respect, I do not give any man a reason to have bad ideas about me. My dress diverts attention from my body to the inside of me, in my mind. It makes me feel feminine, while I also send a message with it: “this is a private area. It only belongs to me and God. (And of course my husband ...)”⁶

Islamic modesty creates two parallel moral spaces: a conciliatory moral space that benefits a woman (values her, distinguishes her) and assures her self-esteem and respect (as an individual in a modern society where subjectivity and moral self matter). E. seems to be emancipated when she describes this moral space. The second moral space is conflictual (marginalizes her), as Islamic modesty assumes that a man has, by nature, bad ideas about women who do not dress according to Islam, and that man is a predator (associated with Western society today). E. wants others to see her soul and not her body (body devaluing). Under the pressure of this second moral space, E. becomes resilient and submits in order to return to conciliation, but this time, in a traditional moral system: authority over her body is not only individual, but shared with God and her husband.

Muslim discourses on ethics often mobilize the notion of man’s inherent nature as a predator. In particular, Muslim theologians and intellectuals use the metaphor of men as wolves (*al-dhi’āb al-bashariyya*): *ḥijāb* (headscarf) then is seen as victim as well as a rampart against the wolves, *dhi’āb*. A book entitled *Adillat al-ḥijāb, the Proofs of the Headscarf* illustrates this argument. It states that “every reasonable person knows that a woman without headscarf, displaying her beauty, is seen as a sign of insolence, impudence and cheap reputation. Then she would be more likely to be depreciated for her low behaviour showing her beauty as a good to be sold, and then she brings to her self the avidity of the human wolves” (al-Muqaddam 2007: 452).

Another author, ‘Alī al-Ṭanṭāwī, a major Syrian jurist, judge, man of letters and theologian of the Muslim Brotherhood goes further. In his widely popular text *Yā ibnatī (Oh My Daughter)*, al-Ṭanṭāwī warns his daughter as follows “had you known that men are all wolves and you are but a sheep, then you would have

⁶ Clothing and morals: <http://iszlam.com/blog-bejegyzesek/item/489-oltozkodas-es-erkolcsok> (2017.03.29.)

fled from the wolf as a sheep uses to flee from the wolf...the wolf only wants meat from a sheep, while the man wants from you something more precious than meat is for a sheep, and worse than death for her, he wants from you the most valuable thing in you: your chastity... the life of a dishonored women is worse a hundred times than death for a sheep devoured by a wolf" (al-Ṭanṭāwī 1985: 13).

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to assess how Muslim Hungarians have recourse to Islamic modesty and to morally distinguish themselves. One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that moral distinctiveness could be both a resource and a limitation for a moral agent. While it could offer social capital as parallel ethics, protesting and defying the moral and social orders, the risk for marginality limits considerably this moral gain. The social guilt of being marginal pushes the moral agents to reconciliation: either through looking for a moral ground with local agents (Hungarian Muslim women who dress like traditional Hungarian women) or through submission to the Islamic patriarchal order.

As one Muslim woman told me: "my religion and my scarf are parts of my secret garden. Having never wanted to proselytize during my student and professional career, I saw myself doing it in spite of myself because my scarf is visible. It is not the fault of my headscarf but that of society that has excluded it". The headscarf allows women to feel difference, value and pride, while on the other hand, it excludes them. While being a visible sign of religious modesty, it is still obsessed with immodesty, as it covers what it sees as immodesty and therefore judges morally women with no headscarf. Other limitations include forbidding the headscarf in public schools, as in the case of France, and as many companies do. This in turn creates parallel education (the creation of Islamic schools to respond to the demand by veiled female students, and the creation of Islamic business to offer job opportunities for veiled women).

As a social category, distinctiveness encompasses the four anthropological paradigms of explaining Islamic modesty today (modesty as a system of meaning, a social tool of a patriarchal order, a lived experience of being fully Muslim or a politically pious act), demonstrating how meaning, patriarchal order, experience, and political piety are aspects of an individual and/or collective moral economy. Meaning, function and experience evolve and change in accordance to the benefit or harm a moral agent could draw from a given moral action.

This study has shown that distinction serves social functions: Covering paganism is a disruption within the social order, condemning the other as immodest. It has also confirmed that visibility stands at the center of modesty, as the latter should be enjoined in public while immodesty should be reprimanded. Controlling the outer appearance is no less important to Islamic modesty than controlling the inner characteristics. Control does not entail losing any benefit as modesty

protects women and increases their value. Despite some signs of individualization and internalization of Muslim modesty, the latter is still largely a social matter in which individuals and societies have a moral responsibility to invest and establish parallel ethics.

References

- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1986): *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila (2009): Modesty Discourses: Overview. *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*, General Editor Suad Joseph. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1872-5309_ewic_EWICCOM_0118a> (2017.03.29.).
- ‘Afifi, Tāhā ‘Abd Allāh (1987): *Ḥaqq al-ḥayā’*. Cairo: Dār al-I’tisām.
- al-Aḥmad, Yūsuf (2008): *Ṣawt al-mar’a*. Riyadh: Mu’assasat al-Durar al-Saniyya.
- al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl (2009): *Al-Adab al-mufrad*. Leicester: UK Islamic Academy.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1979): *La Distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Damir-Geilsdorf, Sabine, Tramontini, Leslie (2015): Renegotiating shari‘a-Based Normative Guidelines in Cyberspace: The Case of Women’s ‘awra. *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 9(1): 32.
- El Guindi, Fadwa (1999): *Veil: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid (1984): *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn, Part II, Book on the Etiquette of Marriage*, Translated by Madelain Farah. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid (1993), *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn, Volume III*, Translated by Fazl-ul-Karim. Karachi: Darul-Ishaat.
- al-Ḥamad, Muḥammad (2013): *La pudeur*. Riyadh: Le bureau de prêche de Rabwah.
- Hossain, Rokeya Sakhawat (2013): *Sultana’s Dream: And Selections from The Secluded Ones*. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY.
- Ibn al-Bāghandī, Muḥammad (1977): *Musnad ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz*. Multān: al-Maktaba al-Fārūqiyya.
- Kaivanara, Marzieh (2016): Virginité Dilemma: Re-Creating Virginité Through Hymenoplasty in Iran. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18(1): 71–83.
- Krawietz, Birgit (1991): *Die Ḥurma: Schariatrechtlicher Schutz vor Eingriffen in die körperliche Unversehrtheit nach arabischen Fatwas des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

- Krawietz, Birgit (2014): Prelude to Victory in Neo-traditional Turkish Oil Wrestling: Sense Perceptions, Aesthetics and Performance. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 31(4): 445–458.
- Mahmood, Saba (2001): Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent. *Cultural Anthropology*, 16(2): 202–236.
- al-Mawsū‘a al-fiqhiyya (1990) Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf.
- Meneley, Anne (1996): Tournaments of Value: Sociability and Hierarchy in a Yemeni Town. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- al-Muqaddam, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ismā‘īl (2007): *Adillat al-hijāb, al-Iskandariyya*: Dār al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn.
- Schulz, Dorothea (2012): Dis/Embodying Authority: Female Radio ‘Preachers’ and the Ambivalences of Mass-Mediated Speech in Mali. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 44(1): 23–43.
- Shirazi, Faegheh (2016): *Brand Islam: The Marketing and Commodification of Piety*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Siraj, Asifa (2011): Meanings of Modesty and the hijab Amongst Muslim Women in Glasgow, Scotland. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 18(6): 716–731.
- al-Tibrizī, al-Khaṭīb Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh (1810): *Mishcāt-Ul-Māsābih or Collection of the Most Authentic Traditions Regarding the Actions and Sayings of Muhammed*. Calcutta: Hindoostanee Press.
- al-Ṭanṭāwī, ‘Alī (1985): *Yā ibnatī*, Medina: Maktabat al-Dār.

AUTHORS / SZERZŐK and EDITORS / SZERKESZTŐK

BAUMANN Tímea

kulturális antropológus, magyar mint idegen nyelv tanár, TG-Partner Bt. és
Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Általános Orvostudományi Kar, Nemzetközi Oktatási
Központ (Pécs)
E-mail cím: timi.baumann@gmail.com

Abdessamad BELHAJ

researcher in Islamic studies
MTA-SZTE Research Group for the Study of Religious Culture (Szeged)
E-mail: belhaj.abdessamad@gmail.com

CsÁJI László Koppány

néprajzkutató, kulturális antropológus, jogász
doktorandusz, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Bölcsészettudományi Kar,
Néprajz – Kulturális Antropológia Tanszék (Pécs)
E-mail cím: csaji.koppany@gmail.com

Beatrice GABORIN

ethnologist
Masters' Student in Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, Department of
Culture, Politics and Society, Università degli Studi di Padova (Padova, Italy)
E-mail: beatrice.gaborin@gmail.com

Chris HANN

social anthropologist
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Halle/Saale, Germany)
E-mail: hann@eth.mpg.de

HORVÁTH Márk

filozófus, Absentology Műhely és ELTE BTK (Budapest)
mesterszakos hallgató, Filozófia Intézet, ELTE BTK (Budapest)
E-mail cím: purplemark@hotmail.com

Kathryn M. HUDSON

linguist
Masters' Student, University at Buffalo (USA)
E-mail: khudson@buffalo.edu